

CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP

3/18/09

**Environmental Defense Center Conference Room,
906 Garden Street, Santa Barbara**

Present: Linda Krop (EDC), Shiva Polefka (EDC), Greg Helms (The Ocean Conservancy), Jean Holmes (League of Women Voters of SB), Jessie Altstatt (SB Channelkeeper), Jackie Dragon (Pacific Environment), Annie Crawley, Vic Cox, Michael Smith (Gray Whales Count), Rachel Couch, Gail Osherenko, Debra Herring

CINMS Staff: Michael Murray

I. INTRODUCTIONS

II. OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

Gulf of Farallones & Monterey Bay NMS Advisory Councils adopted a joint resolution supporting our recommendations and supporting attention by the National Marine Sanctuary program. Next steps: (1) Cordell Banks NMS and Olympic Coast NMS Advisory Councils to consider report and resolutions; (2) SAC Summit presentation in May; (3) EDC (and potentially others) to sponsor movie, "Sea Change" later this year; (4) Public comment at CA Coastal Commission hearing in Ventura in April, including request for a workshop at a later hearing; (5) EDC sent request for funding and support for research via the NMS Reauthorization Act and S. 22. Mike Murray reported that CINMS staff are seeking partnership opportunities and funding for research and monitoring.

III. WHALES AND SHIPPING

The Conservation seat participates on the SAC subcommittee. The current focus of the subcommittee is on developing case studies to assess effectiveness of other efforts to reduce impacts of shipping on marine animals. A CINMS intern is working on case studies addressing the Hawaiian Islands, Stellwagen Banks, and Glacier Bay. Shiva is taking the lead on developing a case study of the Port of Long Beach Green Flag program. Jackie referred Shiva to David Pettit at NRDC. The subcommittee will make its report to the SAC in May or July. Mike reported that the CINMS continues its surveillance activities and data collection and dissemination. The CWG recommends that we invite a panel of experts and stakeholders to make a presentation to the SAC. We also reiterated our desire that NMFS expand the circumstances warranting issuance of Notices to Mariners. The CWG also raised concerns about the lack of protection for the gray whale in the SB harbor.

IV. MLPA/MARINE RESERVES

Greg reported on the progress and status of the MLPA process. The stakeholders have completed the process of developing maps to be evaluated. External proposals have also

been submitted, including one by SB Channelkeeper/Santa Monica Baykeeper. A total of nine maps (6 from the stakeholder groups and 3 from the public) have been submitted. They are vastly different. Next steps: meetings by the Blue Ribbon Task Force, Regional Stakeholder Groups; scientific and socioeconomic evaluation of maps.

V. MANAGEMENT PLAN - BOUNDARY

The final Management Plan includes the commitment to evaluate CINMS boundary options. The CINMS has already completed a Biogeographic Study. The next step would be for the CINMS to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate various boundary alternatives. There are also other efforts along the west coast to consider expanding existing Sanctuaries. Mike reported that there is no funding to initiate CINMS review in this fiscal year, but that the CINMS is still committed to the evaluation process. EDC and its interns have conducted some initial research on options and justifications supporting boundary expansion. Certain CWG participants may prepare an analysis of the benefits and concerns regarding boundary expansion.

VI. WAVE ENERGY

Shiva pointed out that there are a couple offshore wave energy projects proposed in our region. He noted that although we support renewable energy, such projects may cause adverse impacts and produce user conflicts in our region, particularly if sited within the CINMS. The CWG considered a proposed resolution (see attached) that addresses siting of ocean energy projects, and recommends that siting of offshore ocean energy facilities should be carefully considered to identify areas with the best combination of high energy potential, low risk of harm to the marine environment and wildlife, minimal interference with existing ocean uses and habitat values, and maximum availability of impact mitigation measures. In addition, the proposed resolution expresses a concern that energy facilities not be sited within the CINMS itself due to conflict with CINMS regulations.

DRAFT

Resolution of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Regarding Offshore Ocean Energy Projects

Whereas the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary was created under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act based on the special national significance of the area's conservation, recreational, ecological, historical, scientific, cultural archeological, educational and esthetic qualities, and the communities of living marine resources it protects; and

Whereas, increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other anthropogenic greenhouse gases pose major threats to the ocean environment from acidification and climate change; and

Whereas, the CINMS Advisory Council represents groups of ocean stakeholders concerned about marine resource conservation, the sustainability of local fisheries, and the vitality of coastal communities, harbors and regional economies, and therefore recognizes the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions through increased energy efficiency and development of renewable energy sources; and

Whereas, technologies designed to commercially harvest offshore ocean energy— wave, tide, current, and wind— are likely to play a role in our energy future, but are presently untested on the West Coast, and could cause adverse impacts to marine resources and ecosystems in and around CINMS, and produce significant conflicts with existing human uses of the regional marine environment, and

Whereas constructing wave energy devices, platforms, seabed anchoring systems, and burying and laying transmission cables along the seafloor of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary would directly conflict with CINMS regulations, and such activities would not likely qualify for a Sanctuary permit since such permits are limited to a narrow range of purposes including research, education, salvage and recovery or to assist in managing the Sanctuary; and

Whereas, an expedited effort to significantly curb carbon dioxide emissions is imperative, but existing sensitive and valuable marine resources in and around CINMS need not and must not be sacrificed to achieve this end;

Now therefore be it resolved by the CINMS Advisory Council that:

For renewable energy technology to meet its considerable promise to protect our environment, it must be both carefully designed and appropriately sited; and

The siting of offshore ocean energy facilities should be carefully considered using comprehensive marine spatial planning that identifies areas with the best combination of high energy potential, low risk of harm to the marine environment and wildlife, minimal interference with existing ocean uses and habitat values, and maximum availability of impact mitigation measures;

The CINMS Advisory Council believes that, given its regulations and statutory objectives, the waters and subsea lands within CINMS are not an appropriate location to site energy facilities.

Be it further resolved that this recommendation be communicated to all relevant parties including the Director of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.